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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2470
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0078
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0054
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0627

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 000934

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [USUN](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [EU](#) [FI](#)
SUBJECT: FINLAND RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON SYRIA

REF: STATE 150032

Classified By: POLCHIEF GREGORY THOME FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Charge delivered subject demarche to Finnish MFA Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Markus Lyra September 13. She emphasized that the US and EU share the goal of preventing new hostilities in Lebanon and the rest of the region, but that our views on contacts with Syria continue to differ. She outlined carefully the four principles that underpin our Syria policy, and reminded Lyra that EU contacts with Syria over the past year have not yielded a positive change in the SARG's behavior.

12. (C) Lyra responded by thanking Charge for sharing the principles that guide our Syria policy and by calling our points "totally valid;" the EU agrees that Syria's behavior needs to change in all four areas. However, he reminded, the EU has concluded it must reach out to all parties who can have an impact on promoting peace in Lebanon and the wider region. Syria is indeed a bad actor, Lyra said, but it is "a relevant party" and therefore one with whom the EU wants to have dialogue. "The Union is united in our approach," he said, adding that even France's objections to contacts with Syria have been "overstated." In any case, Lyra said, the GOF and the EU appreciate US concerns and views, and would seek to reflect those views in any future conversations with the SARG.
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